REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The Office Action mailed March 22, 2006 has been carefully considered.

Reconsideration in view of the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Applicant hereby requests acknowledgement of the Information Disclosure Statement

filed August 19, 2004.

<u>The 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) Rejection</u>

Claims 1 – 39 are rejected as allegedly being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 5,537,141 to

Harper et al. (Harper) in view of U.S. Patent 5,157,660 to Kuwahara et al. (Kuwahara).

Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1 – 39 are not anticipated nor rendered obvious by the

combination of Harper and Kuwahara.

In regard to claims 1 – 5, 14 – 18, and 27 – 31 applicants respectfully submit the

following. Claim 1 includes the following limitations.

A voice communications method comprising:
  a process at a terminal at which voice is input for generating voice data indicating said voice;
  a process at a server for receiving said voice data;
  a process at said server for sending said voice data to a predetermined terminal;
  a process at said predetermined terminal for receiving said voice data;
  a process at the terminal that received said voice data for outputting the voice indicated by said voice data;
  a process at the terminal that received said voice data for generating a reception result of said voice data;
  a process at the terminal that generated said voice data for receiving said reception result;
and
  a process at the terminal that received said reception result for <u>visually indicating a reception state of said voice data based on said reception result.</u>

(Claim 1) (Emphasis added)

As the Examiner has noted, Harper does not include the limitation of a visual indication

of a "reception state" of voice data based on a "reception result". The student response data of

Harper cannot be equated with the claimed reception result. Moreover, Harper does not disclose

a reception state based upon the reception result. Therefore, Harper cannot disclose the

limitation of visually indicating the reception state.

The Examiner states that Kuwahara discloses the limitation of visually indicating a

reception state of said voice data based on said reception result. However, a thorough reading of

Kuwahara makes clear that the response message of Kuwahara is a character message .

Kuwahara discloses the following

In a case where the person on the call destination side responds to the call request, the person transmits a character message of a response by use of keys on the portable terminal 4 to the call initiator and then connects the terminal to a fixed terminal 8 nearby. In the embodiment of FIG. 1, there is shown an example wherein each fixed terminal 8 is provided with an insertion hole in which a portable wireless terminal 4 is to be installed to establish a connection between the fixed terminal 8 and the portable terminal 4. In addition to the mechanical connection as above, the connection between these terminals may be achieved, for example, through a radio wave.

On the call initiator side, by recognizing the response message from the called person on the display of the own portable terminal 4, the call initiator attaches the own portable terminal 4 onto a fixed terminal 8 nearby. When the portable terminals 4 respectively of the call initiator and the call termination person are installed in the respective fixed terminals 8, there is automatically established a connection of the B channel therebetween through the switch 1, thereby enabling a speech to be conducted.

(Kuwahara, col. 6, lines 8 – 30) (Emphasis added)

Therefore, in Kuwahara the user must read the message every time he talks thus

disrupting conversation. In contrast, the invention as claimed provides a visual indication of the

reception state allowing the user to determine whether his voice has reached the listener without

disrupting conversation. Such limitation is not disclosed in Kuwahara.

Applicants submit therefore, claim 1 is not rendered obvious by the cited combination.

Applicants further submit that claims 2 – 5, 14 – 18, and 27 – 31 are, likewise, not rendered

obvious for the same reasons.

In regard to claims 6 – 8, 13, 19 – 21, 26, 32 – 34, and 39 applicants respectfully submit

the following. Claim 6 includes the following limitations.

> A voice communications method comprising:
> a process at a terminal at which voice is input for generating utterance data, which
> is shorter than the voice data indicating said voice and which is data indicating an
> utterance;
> a process at a server for receiving said utterance data;
> a process at said server for sending said utterance data to a predetermined
> terminal;
> a process at said predetermined terminal for receiving said utterance data;
> a process at the terminal that received said utterance data for indicating the
> utterance by the terminal that sent said utterance data;
> a process at the terminal that sent said utterance data for generating said voice
> data;
> a process at said server for receiving said voice data;
> a process at said server for sending said voice data to said predetermined terminal;
> a process at said predetermined terminal for receiving said voice data; and
> a process at the terminal that received said voice data for outputting the voice
> indicated by said voice data.

(Claim 6) (Emphasis added)

The cited references alone, or in combination do not disclose the limitation of "utterance

data" as described and defined in the specification. As previously stated to the former Examiner,

applicants maintain that utterance data cannot be equated with the header information of Harper.

The Examiner has not addressed the limitation of utterance data in the current office action.

Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner clarify the disclosure of utterance data in the

cited references.

Applicants submit therefore, claim 6 is not rendered obvious by the cited combination.

Applicants further submit that claims 7 – 8, 13, 19 – 21, 26, 32 – 34, and 39 are, likewise, not

rendered obvious for the same reasons.

In regard to claims 9 – 13, 22 – 26, and 35 – 39 applicants respectfully submit the

following. Claim 9 includes the following limitations:

> A voice communications method comprising:
>> a process at a server for <u>storing permission or denial</u> <u>for sending data from one</u>
> <u>optional terminal to another optional terminal</u>;
>> a process at a terminal at which voice is input for generating voice data indicating
> said voice;
>> a process at said server for receiving said voice data;
>> a process at said server for sending said voice data to terminal to which data is
> permitted to be sent from the terminal that sent said voice data;
>> a process at the terminal to which data is permitted to be sent from the terminal
> that sent said voice data for receiving said voice data; and
>> a process at the terminal that received said voice data for outputting the voice
> indicated by said voice data.

(Claim 9) (Emphasis added)

In contrast, Harper does not disclose sending data from one optional terminal to another.

Harper is limited to disclosing transmission between a particular terminal and an optional

terminal. Harper discloses only that an administrative computer authorizes transmission between

a student terminal and the administrative computer. Such cannot be equated with sending data

from an optional terminal to another. In Harper, at least one of the two terminals is not optional,

it is the administrative computer. Harper, therefore does not disclose this limitation and, in fact,

precludes such a limitation. Data transmission between one optional terminal and another

optional terminal is disclosed in the specification and at Figure 19. It is clear that Harper does

not disclose or suggest the limitation as claimed.

Moreover, the authorization transmitted by the administrative computer is merely the transmission of data from the classroom master units to the administrative computer. This cannot be equated with the claimed limitation of "permission or denial for sending data from one optional terminal to another optional terminal."

Kuwahara does not remedy this deficiency, nor does the Examiner assert that Kuwahara discloses such limitation. Applicants submit therefore, claim 9 is not rendered obvious by the cited combination. Applicants further submit that claims 10 – 13, 22 – 26, and 35 – 39 are, likewise, not rendered obvious for the same reasons.

Applicants respectfully submit that all of the pending claims include at least one of the foregoing limitations not taught by Harper, and that none of the cited references remedy the defects noted. Therefore applicants respectfully submit that claims 1 – 39 are not anticipated by Harper nor rendered obvious by Harper or any of the cited references, alone or in combination.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully asserted that the claims are in condition for allowance.

Conclusion

If, in the opinion of the Examiner, an interview would expedite the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney at the number indicated below.

Applicant respectfully requests that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case.

Please charge any additional required fee or credit any overpayment not otherwise paid or

credited to our deposit account No. 50-1698.

Respectfully submitted,

THELEN REID & PRIEST, LLP

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